

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 5, 14 and 17, and AMEND claims 1-4, 6 and 8-10 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A multi-throttle apparatus, comprising:
  - a throttle body that defines a plurality of intake passages corresponding to respective engine cylinders;
  - a plurality of throttle valves that are disposed respectively in said plurality of intake passages;
  - a throttle shaft that supports said plurality of throttle valves to be simultaneously opened/closed;
  - drive means that includes a motor for rotatably driving said throttle shaft; and
  - a return spring that returns said throttle valves to a predetermined angular position, wherein
    - said drive means is disposed to apply a driving force to said throttle shaft at a location in a mutual interval close to the center, said mutual interval being one of mutual intervals between said throttle valves disposed at a plurality of locations,
    - said return spring is disposed close to a location to which the driving force of said drive means is applied, and
    - said throttle body includes bearings that support said throttle shaft in said plurality of mutual intervals between said intake passages, and
    - said throttle shaft comprises two throttle shafts separated by the area as a border to which the driving force of said drive means is applied, said two throttle shafts being connected so as to rotate coaxially and integrally.

2. (currently amended) A multi-throttle apparatus, comprising:  
a throttle body that defines a plurality of intake passages corresponding to respective engine cylinders;  
a plurality of throttle valves that are disposed respectively in said plurality of intake passages;  
a throttle shaft that supports said plurality of throttle valves to be simultaneously opened/closed;  
drive means that includes a motor for rotatably driving said throttle shaft; and a return spring that returns said throttle valves to a predetermined angular position,  
wherein  
said drive means is disposed to apply a driving force to said throttle shaft at a location in a mutual interval close to the center, said mutual interval being one of mutual intervals between said throttle valves disposed at a plurality of locations,  
said return spring is disposed close to a location to which the driving force of said drive means is applied,  
said throttle body includes bearings that support said throttle shaft in said plurality of mutual intervals between said intake passages, and  
said throttle body is comprised of a plurality of throttle bodies that respectively define said plurality of intake passages, and are connected to each other in the direction in which said throttle shaft extends, and said plurality of throttle bodies comprise an engagement section that engages said bearing~~The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said throttle shaft comprises two throttle shafts separated by the area as a border to which the driving force of said drive means is applied, and said two throttle shafts are connected so as to rotate coaxially and integrally.~~

3. (currently amended) A multi-throttle apparatus, comprising:  
a throttle body that defines a plurality of intake passages corresponding to respective engine cylinders;  
a plurality of throttle valves that are disposed respectively in said plurality of intake passages;  
a throttle shaft that supports said plurality of throttle valves to be simultaneously opened/closed;  
drive means that includes a motor for rotatably driving said throttle shaft; and

a return spring that returns said throttle valves to a predetermined angular position,  
wherein

said drive means is disposed to apply a driving force to said throttle shaft at a  
location on one end of said throttle valves disposed at a plurality of locations,

said return spring is disposed close to a location to which the driving force of said  
drive means is applied, and

said throttle body includes a bearing that supports said throttle shaft in said  
~~mutual interval~~location between said intake passages, and

said throttle body is comprised of a plurality of throttle bodies that respectively  
define said plurality of intake passages, and are connected to each other in the direction in  
which said throttle shaft extends, said plurality of throttle bodies comprising an engagement  
section that engages said bearing.

4. (currently amended) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein  
said return spring includes a plurality of return springs that are disposed along said throttle shaft,  
and apply energizing forces different from each other, and a return spring of said plurality of  
return springs that applies the largest energizing force is disposed close to the location to which  
the driving force of said drive means is applied.

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim ~~5~~2 or 3, wherein  
said plurality of throttle bodies are connected with each other via a spacer that adjusts the  
mutual separated distance.

7. (previously presented) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said  
spacer is formed so as to fix said bearing to said throttle body.

8. (currently amended) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein  
said plurality of throttle valves are formed such that the cross section thereof tapers off to the tip  
thereof as departed from the rotation center.

9. (currently amended) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim ~~2~~1, wherein said return spring includes a plurality of return springs that are disposed along said throttle shaft, and apply energizing forces different from each other, and a return spring of said plurality of return springs that applies the largest energizing force is disposed close to the location to which the driving force of said drive means is applied.

10. (currently amended) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said throttle body is comprised of a plurality of throttle bodies that respectively define said plurality of intake passages, and are connected to each other in the direction in which said throttle shaft extends, and said plurality of throttle bodies comprise an engagement section that engages said bearing.

11. (previously presented) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said throttle body is comprised of a plurality of throttle bodies that respectively define said plurality of intake passages, and are connected to each other in the direction in which said throttle shaft extends, and said plurality of throttle bodies comprise an engagement section that engages said bearing.

12. (previously presented) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said plurality of throttle bodies are connected with each other via a spacer that adjusts the mutual separated distance.

13. (previously presented) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said plurality of throttle bodies are connected with each other via a spacer that adjusts the mutual separated distance.

14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said spacer is formed so as to fix said bearing to said throttle body.

16. (previously presented) The multi-throttle apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said spacer is formed so as to fix said bearing to said throttle body.

17. (cancelled)